

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02
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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9296
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS

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E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, RH. UK

SUBJECT: BRITISH PRESS ON GENEVA TALKS, JANUARY L0

1. WEEKEND COMMENT IS AGAIN GENERALLY PESSIMISTIC.
MONDAY'S TIMES CARRIES A LONG EDITORIAL LOOKING AT THE
IMPLICATIONS OF THE FRONT-LINE PRESIDENTS' DECISION TO
BACK THE NKOMO GROUP. THE DAILY MAIL'S DIPLOMATIC COR-
RESPONDENT SEES AMERICAN LEVERAGE ON SOUTH AFRICA AS THE
BEST HOPE OF AVERTING TOTAL COLLAPSE.

2. TIMES EDITORIAL SEES AS "IMPORTANT" THE FRONT-LINE
PRESIDENTS' DECISION "OPENLY TO BACK THE PATRIOTIC FRONT,
THE ALLIANCE LED BY MR. NKOMO AND MR. MUGABE (WITH MR.
NKOMO LOOKING INCREASINGLY LIKE MR. MUGABE'S PRISONER.)
THEY HAVE NOW IN EFFECT BEEN NOMINATED AS THE OFFICIAL
ZIMBABWE NEGOTIATING AND SUCCESSOR BODY, AND THE
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GUERRILLAS ARE SPECIFICALLY PARTNERED WITH THEM IN THEIR
DECISIONS. THEY HAVE MADE THE MOST EXTREME DEMANDS IN
GENEVA, THE BIGGEST INROADS INTO THE KISSINGER PRO-
POSALS--PRESSING FOR A SHORTER TRANSITION, AN INTERIM
GOVERNMENT TO BE DOMINATED BY AFRICANS BEFORE ELECTIONS,
AFRICAN CONTROL OF THE SECURITY FORCES, A SMALL (IF ANY)
ROLE FOR A BRITISH CHAIRMAN, AND PROCEEDINGS AGAINST

THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ILLEGAL REGIME SINCE 1965.

"IT WOULD SEEM THEREFORE THAT PRESIDENT NYERERE WILL IN EFFECT HAVE TO ADVISE MR. RICHARD THAT WHAT HE CAN AGREE WITH MESSRS. MUGABE AND NKOMO WILL BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE FRONTLINE PRESIDENTS, AND THAT IT IS UP TO MR. RICHARD TO ENSURE THAT WHAT HAS BEEN AGREED BY HIM WITH MESSRS. MUGABE AND NKOMO BECOMES ACCEPTABLE TO MR. SMITH--AND MR. VORSTER.

"THIS COMPLICATES ANY EFFORTS AT MEDIATION. QUITE APART FROM MR. SMITH'S REACTION, IT WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY NOT BE ACCEPTABLE TO BISHOP MUZOREWA AND MR. SITHOLE (WHO CLAIMS HE LEADS THE ZANU FACTION AND NOT MR. MUGABE). THE INDICATIONS ARE THAT IF AN ELECTION WERE HELD AMONG THE RHODESIAN BLACKS IMMEDIATELY BISHOP MUZOREWA WOULD WIN HANDSOMELY OVER MR. NKOMO'S CANDIDATES. THE BISHOP MAY WELL SEE IN THE LUSAKA COMMUNIQUE AN OPEN WARNING TO HIS FOLLOWERS TO CHANGE SIDES FOR THEIR OWN FUTURE GOOD, WHICH HE IS LIABLE TO RESENT AS INTERFERENCE WITH INTERNAL ZIMBABWEAN AFFAIRS AND AN EFFORT BY MR. NKOMO TO SAVE HIS POLITICAL FORTUNES BY UNFAIR MEANS. THIS WILL BE VERY USEFUL TO MR. SMITH'S ARGUMENTS, WHETHER OR NOT IT FRIGHTENS THE BISHOP'S SUPPORTERS INTO ABANDONING HIM, AND HE INTO JOINING THE PATRIOTIC FRONT.

"MR. SMITH CAN NOW INDEED FEEL THAT THIS ANATHEMA-TIZING OF THE BISHOP FROM LUSAKA OPENS A RIFT INTO WHICH HIS OWN TAME AFRICAN INDEPENDENCE PARTY CAN BE INSERTED, TO GARNER AFRICAN SUPPORT FOR THE KISSINGER PLAN WHICH AT LEAST (HE CAN SAY) WOULD POSTPONE INTER-UNCLASSIFIED

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AFRICAN VIOLENCE. HE CAN ADD THAT LUSAKA HAS NOW REMOVED ANY CHANCE OF AN EFFECTIVE BRITISH ROLE--TO REASSURE WHITES OF A FAIR DEAL AS WELL AS AFRICANS THAT CHANGE IS IRREVERSIBLE--WHETHER OR NOT HE WITHDREW HIS OPPOSITION TO IT.

"IT IS HARD TO FOLLOW MR. RICHARD'S REACTION THAT THE COMMUNIQUE SHOULD PLEASE MR. VORSTER. IN EFFECT IT NOW REQUIRES HIM TO PUT PRESSURE ON MR. SMITH NOT JUST TO ACCEPT MODIFICATIONS TO THE KISSINGER PLAN (WHICH MR. VORSTER COULD JUSTIFY TO HIS RESTIVE CONSTITUENTS) BUT TO ACCEPT A PLAN FOR THE RATHER PROMPT REPLACEMENT OF HIMSELF AND HIS COLLEAGUES BY A PATRIOTIC FRONT GOVERNMENT WITH SOME WHITE PARTICIPATION. MR. RICHARD MUST IN FACT ASK MR. VORSTER TO GO MUCH FURTHER THAN DR. KISSINGER DID, WITHOUT DR. KISSINGER'S SPECIAL LEVERAGE.

"IT IS DIFFICULT TO THINK THAT THESE COMPLICATIONS CAN BE SORTED OUT IN THE EIGHT DAYS LEFT BEFORE THE CONFERENCE IS RECONVENED--AT WHICH THE PATRIOTIC FRONT WILL

CLAIM SOLELY TO REPRESENT THE AFRICANS. INDEED, THE

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BASIC DECISIONS CAN NOW ONLY BE TAKEN IN AFRICA."

3. DAILY MAIL DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT: "THE MAIN HOPE OF AVERTING A TOTAL COLLAPSE OF THE CONFERENCE RESTS IN ENLISTING THE INFLUENCE OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S NEW ADMINISTRATION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER THE INAUGURATION ON JANUARY 20. THIS IS THE PRINCIPLE REASON FOR THE PAUSE IN THE PROCEEDING IN GENEVA UNTIL NEXT MONTH. MR. CROSLAND INTENDS TO URGE MR. CYRUS VANCE, THE INCOMING AMERICAN SECRETARY OF STATE, TO GIVE PRIORITY TO EFFORTS DIRECTED TOWARDS A SETTLEMENT AMERICAN LEVERAGE ON SOUTH AFRICA IS STILL THOUGHT TO BE THE BEST WAY OF TILTING THE BALANCE AND GETTING PREMIER SMITH TO RETURN TO THE CONFERENCE TABLE READY TO NEGOTIATE THE TRANSFER OF POWER."

4. SUNDAY TELEGRAPH'S FRONT PAGE STORY IS HEADED
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'HOPES OF SETTLEMENT ON RHODESIA RECEDE.' THE PAPER'S DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT WRITES: "WHITEHALL BELIEVES THAT THE GENEVA CONFERENCE ON RHODESIA, WHICH WAS DUE TO RESUME ON JANUARY 17, WILL HAVE TO BE PUT BACK AT LEAST THREE WEEKS BECAUSE OF OPPOSITION ENCOUNTERED BY MR. IVOR RICHARD DURING HIS VISIT TO SALISBURY. THE HARD REJECTION OF THE BRITISH PROPOSALS BY MR. SMITH HAS CONFIRMED THAT THE ODDS ARE AGAINST A SETTLEMENT. INFORMED BRITISH SOURCES ESTIMATE THAT THE CHANCES AGAINST A BREAKTHROUGH ARE THREE TO TWO."

5. OBSERVER CORRESPONDENT IN LUSAKA: "WITH MR. RICHARD EXPECTED TO VISIT RHODESIA AND SOUTH AFRICA FOR A SECOND TIME THIS WEEK, THE REACTION OF THIS WEEKEND'S AFRICAN SUMMIT HERE TO BRITAIN'S PROPOSALS IS IMPORTANT. IF MR. RICHARD CAN RETURN TO PRETORIA WITH BROAD ACCEPTANCE OF THE BRITISH PROPOSALS BY THE AFRICAN LEADERS AND BLACK NATIONALISTS, AND IF MR. VORSTER CAN BE CONVINCED THAT THE PROPOSALS WILL ENSURE AN 'ORDERLY' TRANSITION TO INDEPENDENCE, THEN MR. SMITH'S CALCULATION THAT HE CAN HOLD OUT BY COUNTING ON MILITARY SUPPORT FROM PRETORIA WILL BE SERIOUSLY IN DOUBT."

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